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James B. Donovan Will Speak Sept. 11 To Catholic Lawyers; He Arranged Cubans' Release, Pleaded For Red Spy

Thomas E. DuPre, President of the Catholic Lawyers Guild, has announced that the Honorable James Britt Donovan, President of the Board of Education of the City of New York, and noted writer and lecturer, will speak at a dinner following the traditional Red Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg on Saturday, Sept. 11.

His Excellency, Bishop Thomas A. Donnellan, will preach the homily at the Mass. It will be followed by a reception at the home of Bishop Donnellan, for all of the attorneys and their wives. A dinner, at which Mr. Donovan will speak, will be held immediately following the reception.

The Red Mass is the popular name for the special celebration of the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit in honor of St. Thomas Moore and St. Ives, patrons of the legal profession, and marking the opening of the law courts in the fall. The Red Mass is celebrated each fall in most of the larger dioceses and archdioceses in the United States.

James Britt Donovan is best known for his services as General Counsel to the Cuban Families Committee for the Liberation of Prisoners of War, which negotiated the release of twelve hundred Cuban prisoners, who survived the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April, 1961.

After months of negotiations in Cuba with the Castro Government, which continued during the so-called "missile crisis," Mr. Donovan arranged the release



JAMES B. DONOVAN

After a jury trial which attracted international attention, Abel was convicted. At his sentencing, Mr. Donovan pleaded that his execution would not be in the interests of the United States since in the future an American, engaged in espionage, might be captured by Soviet Russia and at such time an exchange of prisoners might be deemed desirable by the U.S. Government. Abel was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment.

Invasion Brigade on Christmas Eve, 1962, in exchange for private donations of drugs, medicines and baby foods to the American Red Cross for the benefit of the Cuban people. He also arranged (without further donations) for the immediate release of almost 5,000 relatives of the prisoners and hundreds of political prisoners.

Thereafter, during the winter of 1963, he arranged

Donovan arranged on trips to with the Soviet Embassy and Cuba for the release of all the East German Government-Americans held prisoner by them, arranged for the release of U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers by Soviet Russia, and the release of United States student Frederick Pryor held by East Germany, in exchange for the United States release of Colonel Abel.

By the conclusion of the mission in June, 1963, it had resulted in the release of over 9,700 Americans and Cubans from Cuba to the United States.

Mr. Donovan is also well known for his participation in the Abel Case. In August, 1957, Rudolf Abel was indicted in the United States District Court, Brooklyn, for the capital crime of being the chief of Soviet espionage in the United States. At the suggestion of a committee appointed by the Brooklyn Bar Association, Mr. Donovan was appointed counsel for Mr. Abel.

This case was subsequently reviewed by the United States Court of Appeals and finally by the Supreme Court. In affirming the conviction of Mr. Abel, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court expressed the gratitude of the entire court to Mr. Donovan: "In my time on this Court no man has undertaken a more arduous, more self-sacrificing task. It gives the Court great comfort to know that members of our bar associations are willing to undertake this sort of public service in this type of case, which normally would be offensive to them."

In early 1962, at the request of the United States Government, Mr. Donovan went to West Berlin and

For his service in this case, Mr. Donovan was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Medal by the Central Intelligence Agency, presented by its Director, John A. McCone, at the direction of President Kennedy, who wrote a personal letter of congratulations.

The 1965 Red Mass will be the Third Red Mass sponsored by the Catholic Lawyers Guild of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. In 1963, Reverend Tinnelly, Dean of the School of Law of St. John's University, was the speaker at ceremonies held at the Lake Placid Club. Bishop Donnellan presided over the 1964 Red Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral. The featured speaker at the dinner at Wadhams Hall following the Mass was the Honorable John Murphy, Chief Judge of the New York City Criminal Courts.